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The situation in the Middle East

Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

Security Council
Fifth-sixth year

Letter dated 12 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the pleasure of enclosing the press communiqué of the eightieth session of the Ministerial Council of the Cooperation Council for the Gulf Arab States, held at Jeddah on 7 and 8 September 2001 (see annex).

I would appreciate your issuing the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under items 53, 65 and 109 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jassim M. **Buallay**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/56/150.

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Annex to the letter 12 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

Press Communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its eightieth session, held at Jeddah on 7 and 8 September 2001

On 7 and 8 September 2001, the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its eightieth session at Jeddah under the chairmanship of His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al Khalifah, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain and Chairman-in-Office of the Ministerial Council. The meeting was attended by:

His Excellency Mr. Rashid Bin Abdullah al-Nuaimi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates;

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia;

His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs of Oman;

His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabr Al Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar;

His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait;

His Excellency Sheikh Jamil Ibrahim Al-Hujeilan, GCC Secretary-General, also participated in the meeting;

The Ministerial Council considered the agreement to establish the joint high commission for cooperation between Bahrain and Kuwait and the agreement on diplomatic and consular cooperation between the two countries, signed in Kuwait on 3 September 2001. The Council welcomed and commended these two agreements as representing a laudable and important step which would enhance and promote the progress of joint action by the GCC countries and which accorded with the supreme goals of the Council.

Within the framework of the follow-up and promotion of joint action aimed at the realization of the intentions of the leaders of the GCC countries and the aspirations of their peoples and with a view to promoting security and stability in the region, the Ministerial Council reviewed the outcome of the meetings of a number of ministerial committees and major regional, Arab and international political events and issues.

Cooperation

With regard to economic affairs, the Council reviewed the outcome of the tenth meeting of the ministerial committee on planning and development and the committee's recommendations and decisions. These related to the unification of deadlines for the holding of general censuses, with a view to the provision of expenses; the strengthening of complementary policies relating to population and development planning; and the adoption of an appropriate mechanism for the

formulation of a population policy in conjunction with the plans and programmes of action for the implementation of the goals set forth in the general framework for the population strategy for the GCC countries within a specific time frame. The committee's recommendations also concerned the question of preparing the economies of the GCC countries to adjust to new local, regional and international economic and social developments and the question of the applications of "electronic government", meaning utilization of Internet communications to provide government services to citizens more easily and at lower cost in response to ongoing developments in the technological and information fields.

The Council also considered the outcome of the sixth meeting of ministers concerned with municipal affairs and the decisions arrived at by them with regard to the strengthening and promotion of cooperation between the GCC countries in the following fields: comprehensive strategic architectural planning; the urban environment; the training of national cadres; the monitoring of foodstuffs; stimulation of municipal consultations; participation of the private sector in the financing of municipal projects; preservation of the Gulf architectural heritage; and the establishment of a municipal database for the GCC countries.

In the field of man and the environment, the Ministerial Council reviewed the outcome of the tenth meeting of ministers responsible for culture in the GCC countries. These included the establishment of the prize for creativity offered by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, the establishment of joint cultural programmes and activities, issues relating to the protection of copyright and intellectual property rights, establishment of a book week, promotion of book publishing and the expansion of book circulation in the GCC countries.

The Council considered the progress made in military cooperation among those States and the steps successfully taken and expressed its aspiration for continued achievement in this field.

The Ministerial Council held a special meeting at which it met with the Chairman of the Advisory Board and a number of the Board's members to consider the views arrived at by the Advisory Board of the Supreme Council at the second meeting of its fourth session, held in Bahrain on 12 and 13 June 2001 in implementation of the decision of the Supreme Council at its twenty-first session to request the Advisory Council to study the topics of education and the development of the educational system; energy and the environment; water strategies; and scientific and technical research. The Ministerial Council decided to continue its study of these views in preparation for referring them to the Supreme Council.

Political issues

The Ministerial Council discussed developments in the context of Iraq's compliance with the Security Council resolutions relating to the situation between Iraq and Kuwait and the consequences of its occupation of Kuwait.

The Council reiterated its strong condemnation and denunciation of the Iraqi political message that had been voiced by a number of senior Iraqi officials and Iraq's arrogance towards and intimidation of its neighbours. It urged the Iraqi Government to desist from such irresponsible statements and to demonstrate its good faith in both word and deed.

In its concern to create appropriate conditions for the achievement and consolidation of security, peace and stability in the Gulf region, the Council renewed its call to Iraq to discharge in full its obligations under the Security Council resolutions relating to cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations high-level coordinator and the Tripartite Commission in devising an expeditious and definitive solution to the problem of Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and detainees and the return of all Kuwaiti property in its possession. The Ministerial Council also urged Iraq to cooperate with the United Nations in bringing the outstanding issues relating to weapons of mass destruction and monitoring systems to a satisfactory conclusion.

The Council called upon Iraq and the Security Council to engage in an exhaustive dialogue with a view to the discharge of these obligations in a just and comprehensive manner and in accordance with sound principles as a step towards the lifting of sanctions.

The Council stressed that Iraq must undertake to respect the security, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait and that it must take all necessary steps to demonstrate its peaceful intentions towards the GCC countries if the region's security and stability are to be assured.

The Council called upon Iraq to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions with a view to ending the suffering of the Iraqi people, and it once again affirmed that it continued to welcome and to be prepared to participate in all humanitarian initiatives to mitigate that suffering.

The Council again affirmed its consistent position that the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq must be respected and that there must be no interference in its internal affairs.

The Ministerial Council further pursued the mandate entrusted to it by the Supreme Council to examine all available peaceful means that might be conducive to the restoration to the United Arab Emirates of its legitimate rights in its three islands, namely, The Greater Tunb, The Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, that are still being occupied by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Council welcomed the visit made by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Zayed, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates to Tehran on 23 July 2001 and the visit of Mr. Muhammad Ali Abtahi, the envoy of the Iranian President, Mr. Muhammad Khatami, to Abu Dhabi on 3 August 2001. It expressed its hope that those visits would pave the way for efforts to devise a solution to the issue of the three islands.

The Council expressed its full support for all the steps being taken by the United Arab Emirates to restore its sovereignty over its three islands by peaceful means, in accordance with the principle of the collective security of the GCC countries.

The Council reaffirmed its unconditional support for the claim of the United Arab Emirates to the three islands occupied by the Islamic Republic of Iran, namely, The Greater Tunb, The Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa. It affirms the full sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over the three islands as an integral part of the country, the fact that it retains all of its rights in respect of those islands, and the Council's non-recognition of any sovereignty other than that of the United Arab Emirates over

its three islands, their territorial waters, their air space and the related continental shelf and exclusive economic zone.

The Ministerial Council considered with extreme concern the grave deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestine territories as a result of the racist attacks being launched by Israel, the barbaric practices against the struggling Palestinian people, the continuation of the policy of blockade, starvation, intimidation and the assassination of political figures of key importance for the Palestinian people, and the action taken by the occupation forces in the morning of Friday, 10 August 2001, to occupy Orient House, which represents a symbol of Palestinian sovereignty over Jerusalem, thus causing the situation in the region to go from bad to worse because of the Israeli violence against the Palestinian people.

The Ministerial Council holds Israel fully responsible for the grave deterioration of the situation as a result of the policy of aggression and intimidation and Israel's retraction from signed agreements and flight from its responsibilities with regard to the peace process. The Council confirmed that the Arab and Islamic worlds had been waiting with the utmost patience for Israel to change this policy. However, Israel had pushed its aggression beyond all measure, and the time had come for Israel to shoulder its responsibility. The Council expressed its consternation at the fact that the international community, in particular, the United States of America, the primary sponsor of the peace process, had turned a blind eye to Israel's aggressive practices and the illegal measures that Israel was unceasingly carrying out against the Palestinian people. The Council called upon the international community to bring pressure to bear on Israel to prevail upon it to face up to its responsibility vis-à-vis the peace process.

The Ministerial Council condemned these racist Israeli practices and warned that the deterioration of the situation in the Palestinian territories would inevitably lead to the collapse of peace and security in the region as a whole. It held the Israeli Government wholly responsible for the destruction of the peace process. The Council called for immediate intervention by the Security Council, by the co-sponsors of the peace process, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, and by the European Union and Member States to put a halt to the barbaric Israeli acts of aggression to which the Palestinian people is being subjected, to provide international protection for it and to put an end to the occupation of all Arab and Palestinian territories.

The Council reaffirmed the illegality of the Israeli settlements and reiterated that they constitute a fundamental threat to security and prevent its establishment and that the current wave of violence is basically due to the continuance of Israeli occupation and Israeli rejection of the agreements and commitments signed by the two parties on the basis and principles of the Madrid Peace process and the resolutions that embody international legitimacy and Israeli violations of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The Council believes that placing obligations on the Palestinian party without any corresponding obligation on the Israeli party constitutes injustice and a perversion of standards and that calm and a halt to the violence will thus not be achieved. The Council reaffirmed the need for an effective international observer presence in the areas of tension.

The Council condemned the policy of escalation and the provocation and expansion of the scope of the violence being pursued by the Israeli Government vis-

à-vis the neighbouring countries, which is bringing the region near to explosion point and threatening its security and stability.

The Council reaffirmed the support of the GCC countries for Syria's firm position of principle calling for full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Golan Heights to the line of 4 June 1967, in accordance with the Madrid provisions and the principle of land for peace, for the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), for the resumption of negotiations between the two sides from where they left off and for placing on Israel the responsibility for the breakdown of progress on this track. It reaffirmed the continued support of the GCC countries for the Lebanese position calling for the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and Israel's withdrawal from the Shab'a farmlands. It continues to call upon the international community to take all measures to prevail upon Israel to release immediately all Lebanese prisoners and abductees detained in Israeli prisons and other places of detention in contravention of the provisions of international law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the 1907 Convention of The Hague.

The Council again calls upon the international community to take action to transform the Middle East region, including the Gulf, into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The Council affirms once more that Israel must accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and submit all its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency inspection regime.

The Ministerial Council welcomes His Excellency Mr. Hamad Ahmad al-Amir as he takes up his new post as head of the Mission of the GCC countries in Brussels, as of April 2002, and wishes him long-lasting success.